AWARENESS was the key word of Wishbone Ash's success awareness of the music they could produce and a strong conviction that there was an audience for their talent. When their last album, "Pilgrimage", got into the charts after just a week the only people who were surprised the so-called were music-business perts. Certainly the people who'd seen the

"The reason why we're not hat widely known by people in he business," bassist Martin Furner told me, "is that we don't go down places like the Speak London's Speakeasy Club. Most of the people who do get a lot of press coverage or attention do a lot of business over the bar.

band play weren't.

"People who come to see us do so because of our own strength. We've reached a point where we have our own strong following, and we think it's sincere, all hardcore. People don't come to see us because of a sensational thing

they've read in a music paper."
The Speak, or even a pub, is about the last place where you can interview this band. Even a recording studio is taboo, be cause they take their work so seriously that the slightest distraction (even a dumb observer)

puts them off.
So there are two choices meeting them on their home ground in a house near London's Ladbroke Grove, or at a gig.

On their homeground they are relaxed. They don't all live together — Steve and Ted live in the flat upstairs, Martin and his wife on the ground floor, and Andy lives just down the road.





WISHBONE RELY ON

TALENT, NOT LUCK

They live near, yet not on top of. each other.

ANDY POWELL

"When we first met up we wanted to be in each other's com-pany all the time, but you must be careful - after two years together four people tend to get similar in outlook and we think it's important to retain our individual identity. It's a bad thing if you all live together because it makes it a 24-hour-a-day-thing.

"Yet at the same time it's important to live near, because it's a drag if you have to spend two hours before a gig, just going ar

ound picking everyone up."

At a gig, before they go on stage, Wishbone are perhaps the most subdued band ever. There are no bottles of scotch, no "teeny" fans — just a quiet air of sobriety. Ted, the reluctant hero, strums away on his guitar in a corner. Andy sits in another corner. Martin and Steve talk together. Miles, their manager, talks to them about the forthcoming album. It's all business

Ted: "I do tend to drift into the background — the time before a gig is my work time. I can never relax until after we've come off. It's nice to get repaid with a good gig. That's one when the vibrations are good."

One stage, again, Ted is the quieter one — he concentrates so hard that if you look at him closely he looks as if he's either counting from one to 10, cursing quietly to himself, or gasping for breath. Certainly he seems com-

pletely unaware of the audience.
"Yes, I suppose I'm not very conscious of the audience — I know they are there of course, and you must always think of

Andy, on the other hand, is like a toy, just wound up and ready to move around the place.

get a fantastic energy the says. The music starts and triggers off something in my brain. I'm surging with energy. I know that many times looked like a ridiculous clown but that's the way it is.

Martin explains further: "We are fuel for each other. We can pick up energy from the audience and channel it through our music and back again. In the early days we'd be negative if we didn't have a good audience - now I believe the band is in every way to blame for the reaction.

Sometimes we go on stage and pick up a feeling of coldness and resentment — you do pick up things like that. But our ability to cope with such a situation is the reason why we are up on that

Andy: "One thing we've got together is positive thinking. We've talked about it a lot and have acquired the knack of think"A year ago we started some of the numbers for the album, and that's when we had the rough structure. But we're in a much better position now to concentrate on those numbers. We're more earthy, less frantic — more

relaxed."

Wishbone say they would like to have facilities for taping at home. Obviously it would help them get down rough ideas for numbers, so it seems strange they haven't yet got the facilities. Money, it appears, is one of the things holding up this project.

things holding up this project.
"When we were talking about positive thinking, the time we really had to apply it was in the early stages of the band when we had money problems. Now we are fortunate in that we don't owe any money. But we can't all go out and buy just what we like.

Our priorities have got to be right. We all discuss the money side and make democratic deci

'If we have the money, and we want something badly enough, we go out and buy it. But we won't take risks and put our-selves in debt. Something unforeseen might occur. We're still in the early stages as far as the financial side is concerned."

Wishbone are confident that the market for their type of music is still very much alive — despite pundits speculating on the demise of "heavy progressive" music.

"It won't affect us if a certain section want to listen to bubble-

gum music. Anyway, people are saying that the trend is towards leaping about music, and you can leap to our music. We believe if a group have a strong foundation and conviction they will be there on their own. We wouldn't change our style deliberately just to catch on to something new but we'll still be there."

By JULIE

ing positive no matter what we do. Even someone with nominal

talent can make it happen if he

To begin with, Wishbone's po-

sitive thinking project went awry.

"Our enthusiasm ran away with us," they say. But now they

have come to terms with their

been bad — but we've been rather like a chicken with its head cut

off. On the last two albums we've

been finding our feet - our new

album will be the first one on which you'll really be able to

analyse our music. We're synthe-

sising all the various elements

from the past into a form of music that has more continuity.

Steve: "None of our music has

thinks positive.

WEBB

Already Ash are including some of the material from the forthcoming album in their live set. Soon they say, their live act will be threequarters composed of new material — the remainder being from their earlier albums.

You can't ignore the old num bers completely. People still shout for them. Yet it's important to bring in new numbers all the you've got to stimulate, not stagnate.

In April the band tour America for the third time, and the new album'is due for May release.

"This time we should make some money on the tour. Just enough to break even. That's all

And musically, they "We'd like to command respect for what we're doing. Just to know that our music is relev-

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